

IN THE CLAIMS:

A full listing of the claims, including any amendments made by this paper, follows below:

1. (Currently Amended) A binder comprising:
  - a spine having a first edge and a second edge;
  - a front cover pivotally coupled to said first edge of said spine;
  - a rear cover pivotally coupled to said second edge of said spine, wherein said front cover is directly or indirectly attachable to said rear cover to form a self-supporting binder;
  - and
  - a binding mechanism fixedly and non-rotatably coupled to said spine, wherein said binding mechanism is permanently positioned between said first and second edges of said spine and coupled to said spine in an off-center manner such that said binding mechanism is located closer to one of said edges than the other one of said edges.
2. (Original) The binder of claim 1 wherein said spine and said covers are generally flat, planar components and are generally rectangular in front view.
3. (Original) The binder of claim 1 wherein said first and second edges are located on opposite sides of said spine.
4. (Original) The binder of claim 1 wherein said binding mechanism is a three ring binding mechanism.
5. (Original) The binder of claim 1 wherein said binder is movable between a closed position, wherein said front and rear covers are generally parallel and facing each other and said binding mechanism is generally located between said front and rear covers, and a display position wherein said front cover is directly or indirectly attached to said rear cover to form a self-supporting binder and said binding mechanism is not generally located between said front and rear covers.

6. (Original) The binder of claim 5 wherein said binder has a generally closed generally triangular shape in end view when said binder is in said display position.

7. (Original) The binder of claim 5 further comprising closure means located on said front and rear covers for retaining said binder in said closed position.

8. (Currently Amended) The binder of claim 1 wherein said rear cover includes an extension flap that is releasably attachable ~~attached~~ to said front cover when said front cover is directly or indirectly attached to said rear cover.

9. (Original) The binder of claim 8 wherein said extension flap is pivotally coupled to a main portion of said rear cover.

10. (Currently Amended) The binder of claim 8 further comprising attachment means located on said extension flap and on said front cover, wherein said attachment means can be operated to ~~couple~~ releasably attach said extension flap to said front cover.

11. (Original) The binder of claim 10 wherein said part of said attachment means located on said front cover is located on an inner surface of said front cover.

12. (Original) The binder of claim 8 wherein said extension flap is releasably attachable to an inner surface of said rear cover.

13. (Original) The binder of claim 12 further including a pocket located on an inner surface of said rear cover.

14. (Original) The binder of claim 13 wherein said extension flap is configured such that said extension flap generally covers said pocket when said extension flap is releasably attached to said rear cover.

15. (Original) The binder of claim 1 wherein said spine is a generally longitudinal panel and has a lateral width, and wherein said binding mechanism is not centered along said lateral width.

16. (Original) The binder of claim 1 wherein said spine includes a longitudinal centerline and said binding mechanism includes a longitudinal centerline which is generally not aligned with said longitudinal centerline of said spine.

17. (Currently Amended) The binder of claim 1 wherein said binding mechanism is located generally adjacent to said one of said edges such that a display sheet bound in said binding mechanism lies over one of said edges of said spine and lies generally flat and parallel with one of said front or rear covers when said binder is in a display position wherein said front cover is directly or indirectly attached to said rear cover to form a self-supporting binder.

18. (Previously Presented) The binder of claim 1 wherein said binder is configured such that when said front cover is directly or indirectly attached to said rear cover to form a self-supporting binder, said binding mechanism extends generally horizontally.

19. (Original) The binder of claim 1 wherein one of said front or rear covers includes a plurality of openings to receive the outer edge of said binding mechanism therethrough.

20. (Original) The binder of claim 19 wherein each of said openings has a grommet extending around its perimeter.

21. (Original) The binder of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of sheets bound by said binding mechanism.

22. (Original) The binder of claim 1 wherein said binder is movable to a closed position, wherein said front and rear covers are generally parallel and facing each other and said binding

mechanism is generally located between said front and rear covers, and wherein said binder includes closure means for retaining said binder in said closed position.

23. (Original) The binder of claim 22 wherein each cover includes an inner edge and an outer edge, each inner edge being coupled to said spine and said outer edge being located generally opposite the associated inner edge, and wherein said closure means are located generally adjacent to said outer edges.

24. (Currently Amended) A binder comprising:  
a spine having a longitudinal centerline;  
a front cover pivotally coupled to said spine;  
a rear cover pivotally coupled to said spine, wherein said front cover is directly or indirectly attachable to said rear cover to form a self-supporting binder; and  
a binding mechanism fixedly and non-rotatably and directly coupled to said spine and having a longitudinal centerline, wherein said binding mechanism is coupled to said spine in an off-center manner such that said longitudinal centerline of said binding mechanism is generally not aligned with said longitudinal centerline of said spine.

25. (Currently Amended) A method for manipulating a binder comprising:  
providing a binder having a spine having a first edge and a second edge, a front cover pivotally coupled to said first edge of said spine, a rear cover pivotally coupled to said second edge of said spine, and a binding mechanism fixedly and non-rotatably coupled to said spine, wherein said binding mechanism is coupled to said spine in an off-center manner such that said binding mechanism is located closer to one of said edges; and  
directly or indirectly attaching said front cover to said rear cover to form a self-supporting binder, wherein said attaching step includes moving said binder from a closed position, wherein said front and rear covers are generally parallel and facing each other and said binding mechanism is generally located between said front and rear covers, to a display position wherein said front cover is directly or indirectly attached to said rear cover to form a self-supporting binder and said binding mechanism is not generally located between said front and

rear covers, and wherein said binder has a generally closed generally triangular shape in end view when in said display position, and wherein said binding mechanism is positioned relative to said spine when said binder is in said closed position, and wherein said binding mechanism is in the same position relative to said spine when said binder is in said display position.

26. (Canceled).

27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~26~~ 25 wherein said binding mechanism extends generally horizontally when said binder is in said display position.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~26~~ 25 wherein said spine includes a longitudinal centerline and said binding mechanism includes a longitudinal centerline which is generally not aligned with said longitudinal centerline of said spine.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~26~~ 25 further comprising the steps of binding a plurality of pages together by said binding mechanism, and displaying said pages such that said pages lie over one of said edges of said spine and lie against said front cover in a generally flat manner substantially without any creases in said pages caused by lying over a junction of said spine and one of said covers.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously Presented) The binder of claim 1 wherein at least one of said front or rear cover includes attachment means that can be operated to couple front and rear covers to form said self-supporting binder.

33. (Previously Presented) The binder of claim 32 wherein said attachment means is located on both said front and rear covers.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Previously Presented) The binder of claim 24 wherein at least one of said front or rear cover includes attachment means that can be operated to couple front and rear covers to form said self-supporting binder.

36. (Previously Presented) The binder of claim 35 wherein said attachment means is located on both said front and rear covers.

37. (Canceled)

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25 wherein at least one of said front or rear cover includes attachment means that can be operated to couple front and rear covers to form said self-supporting binder.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein said attachment means is located on both said front and rear covers.

40. (Previously Presented) The binder of claim 6 wherein said binding mechanism is positioned relative to said spine when said binder is in said closed position, and wherein said binding mechanism is in the same position relative to said spine when said binder is in said display position.

41. (Currently Amended) The binder of claim 6 wherein said spine is generally flat and planar, and wherein said front cover is directly pivotally coupled to said first edge, and said rear cover is directly pivotally coupled to said second edge, and wherein said generally planar spine is aligned in a plane that is generally parallel to ~~said~~ an underlying support surface when the binder is in said self-supporting configuration.

42. (Canceled)

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein said spine is generally flat and planar, and wherein said front cover is directly pivotally coupled to said first edge, and said rear cover is directly pivotally coupled to said second edge, and wherein said generally planar spine is aligned in a plane that is generally parallel to said support surface when the binder is in said self-supporting configuration.

44. (Previously Presented) A binder comprising:  
a generally flat, planar spine having a first edge and a second edge;  
a front cover pivotally and directly coupled to said first edge of said spine;  
a rear cover pivotally and directly coupled to said second edge of said spine,  
wherein said front cover is directly or indirectly attachable to said rear cover to move said binder into a self-supporting configuration wherein said binder has a generally triangular shape in end view and rests upon a support surface; and  
a binding mechanism coupled to said spine, wherein said binding mechanism is coupled to said spine in an off-center manner such that said binding mechanism is located closer to one of said edges of said spine than the other one of said edges when said binder is in said self supporting configuration such that papers bound to said binding mechanism can lie against one of said covers in a generally flat manner substantially without any creases in said pages caused by lying over a junction of said spine and said one of said covers, and wherein said generally planar spine is aligned in a plane that is generally parallel to said support surface when the binder is in said self-supporting configuration.

45. (Previously Presented) The binder of claim 44 wherein said binding mechanism is fixedly and non-rotatably coupled to said spine.

46. (New) The binder of claim 1 wherein when said front cover is directly or indirectly attached to said rear cover to form said self-supporting binder and said binder is positioned on a support surface said binder is in a self-supporting configuration wherein said binder has a

generally triangular shape in end view, and wherein said binding mechanism is located closer to one of said edges of said spine than the other one of said edges when said binder is in said self supporting configuration such that papers bound to said binding mechanism can lie against one of said covers in a generally flat manner substantially without any creases in said pages caused by lying over a junction of said spine and said one of said covers, and wherein said generally planar spine is aligned in a plane that is generally parallel to said support surface when the binder is in said self-supporting configuration.

47. (New) The binder of claim 1 wherein said binding mechanism is directly coupled to said spine and is not directly coupled to said front cover or to said rear cover.

48. (New) The binder of claim 24 wherein said binding mechanism is directly coupled to said spine and is not directly coupled to said front cover or to said rear cover.

49. (New) The binder of claim 24 wherein said binder is movable between a closed position, wherein said front and rear covers are generally parallel and facing each other and said binding mechanism is generally located between said front and rear covers, and a display position wherein said front cover is directly or indirectly attached to said rear cover to form a self-supporting binder and said binding mechanism is not generally located between said front and rear covers, and wherein said binder has a generally closed generally triangular shape in end view when said binder is in said display position, and wherein said binding mechanism is positioned relative to said spine when said binder is in said closed position, and wherein said binding mechanism is in the same position relative to said spine when said binder is in said display position.

50. (New) The binder of claim 24 wherein when said front cover is directly or indirectly attached to said rear cover to form said self-supporting binder and said binder is positioned on a support surface said binder is in a self-supporting configuration wherein said binder has a generally triangular shape in end view, and wherein said binding mechanism is located closer to one of said edges of said spine than the other one of said edges when said binder is in said self

supporting configuration such that papers bound to said binding mechanism can lie against one of said covers in a generally flat manner substantially without any creases in said pages caused by lying over a junction of said spine and said one of said covers, and wherein said generally planar spine is aligned in a plane that is generally parallel to said support surface when the binder is in said self-supporting configuration.

51. (New) The binder of claim 24 wherein said spine has a first longitudinal edge and a second longitudinal edge, wherein said front cover is pivotally coupled to said first edge and said rear cover is pivotally coupled to said second edge, and wherein said binding mechanism is permanently positioned between said first and second edges of said spine.

52. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein said binding mechanism is directly coupled to said spine and is not directly coupled to said front cover or to said rear cover.

53. (New) The method of claim 25 after said attaching step said binder is positioned on a support surface said binder is in a self-supporting configuration wherein said binder has a generally triangular shape in end view, and wherein said binding mechanism is located closer to one of said edges of said spine than the other one of said edges when said binder is in said self supporting configuration such that papers bound to said binding mechanism can lie against one of said covers in a generally flat manner substantially without any creases in said pages caused by lying over a junction of said spine and said one of said covers, and wherein said generally planar spine is aligned in a plane that is generally parallel to said support surface when the binder is in said self-supporting configuration.

54. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein said binding mechanism is permanently positioned between said first and second edges of said spine.